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SUBJECT: CZECH COMMENTS IN ADVANCE OF THE APRIL EU GAERC

REF: STATE 43742

1. (SBU) Summary: Emboff met with Katerina Sequensova, Deputy Director of the Czech MFA Department of Common Foreign and Security Policy prior to the April 29 EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC). Of note were her comments on the Balkans, Zimbabwe and Burma. Although Iran has been a topic of discussion in many other EU channels, we understand from the Czechs that no GAERC conclusions on Iran have been drafted or circulated. End Summary.

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Western Balkans - Bosnia and Kosovo  
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2, (SBU) Sequensova noted that the Czechs share our pleasure with the progress made by Bosnia on police reform and indicated that they would like to see a Stabilization and Association Agreement signed as soon as possible. She did flag, however, that the agreement needs to be translated into all of the official EU languages and so far the Czechs (and several other nations) have yet to see anything other than unofficial texts. Thus, the Czechs are not optimistic that this agreement will be ready for signing at Tuesday's GAERC.

3. (SBU) On Kosovo, Sequensova spoke first and foremost about the outstanding question of recognition. The GOCR still plans to recognize Kosovo next month, at a date to be determined "very soon" after the May 11 elections in Serbia. According to Sequensova and Czech MFA desk officer for Kosovo, Josef Zrzavecky, the Czechs remain committed to participating in the International Steering Group (ISG), although they have taken a relatively low profile for the moment, given the fact that they have not officially recognized Kosovo yet. The Czech MFA noted that they have allocated financial resources (approximately 200,000 euros) to support the smooth functioning of the International Civilian Office (ICO) and that they plan to attend and participate in the next ISG meeting tentatively scheduled for the second or third week of May. They also plan to attend the upcoming Kosovo Donor's Conference this summer and they are currently exploring what types of contributions (be it financial or personnel with specific expertise) they may be able to provide to the cause.

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Zimbabwe - Increasing Concern  
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4. (SBU) The EU member states are united in their concern about the lack of official election results in Zimbabwe and they plan to emphasize this in the EU conclusions, according to Sequensova. She noted that these conclusions have not been fully drafted at the moment since the member states are waiting to see if there are any developments over the weekend

which will need to be addressed. The Czechs have every expectation that the EU will speak forcefully about the gravity of its concerns.

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Burma - Considering Further Measures  
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15. (SBU) On Burma, Embassy officials understand that there will be a discussion of strengthening sanctions and that in the conclusion the EU will indicated that they are "willing to consider further restrictive measures," given the current situation in Burma. Sequensova did not address exactly what the EU is considering in terms of further measures, nor what would trigger their implementation. We know from our contacts in the Czech MFA Department of Human Rights and Transition Policy that the Czechs have been actively engaged within the EU over the last few weeks to press for more to be done in the area of sanctions. The Czechs also have been engaging other EU member states to outline Czech concerns related to the upcoming Burmese constitutional referendum - specifically intimidation by the Burmese regime, the regime's lack of engagement with ethnic minority representatives and the planned use of separate "yes or no" ballots, which could scare voters into casting their ballots a certain way if voters fear others would be able to easily determine how they voted.

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